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"I make bold to say that we who are now living will behold—nay, may already behold—the dawn of the day of a new religion which is to be really universal in its principles and as broad as humanity in its boundaries; which is not, however, to be Christianity, nor Judaism, nor Buddhism, nor neo-Brahmanism, but a new faith into which the specific religions are in form to die that they may continue to live in spiritual substance."—WM. J. POTTER.

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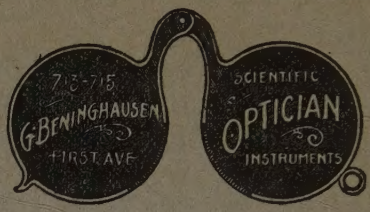

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INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY
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THEISM AND THE THEISTIC CHURCH.

By Charles Voysey.

Theism is a creed so simple and its foundation so accessible to human scrutiny that the question of its difference from Christianity and other creeds can be briefly stated.

In the first place it is necessary to understand the basis of Theism and why that basis was chosen. The basis is laid in the facts of human nature—facts which are never in dispute—viz: that man is an intelligent being, also a moral being and also chiefly that he is a loving being—or at least has the capacity for love.

Take first the intelligence or reason of man. By this he is compelled to seek and find a cause, the ultimate cause of all that is within reach of his observation. Everywhere he sees signs of intelligence (apart from any brain) in the order, regularity and purposive action in the Cosmos. He must believe in Mind as the Source and Preserver and Producer of things as they are evolved. He learns deep scientific truths about Chemistry, Astronomy, Geology and Zoology which reveal to any intelligent mind a something common between itself and the greater Mind which knows everything and ordains everything. This is enough to establish the existence of an intelligent God who knows what He is doing and for what end.

But man is not only intelligent, he is a moral being. He has a conscience, a sense of the difference between right and wrong, a conviction that he is bound to do right and not to do wrong, that he is bound also to do his best to discover (in any case of doubt) what is right and what is wrong; and moreover that his motives must be right as well as his conduct; that e. g. he must not act from hope of reward or from fear of punishment, but simply and solely because it is right; and he knows he ought to do right even if he should suffer for it. This is all the function of conscience, but the moral codes are distinct from the conscience, they are man-made and subject to variation, development and correction. The conscience and its claims do not

change but always demand obedience to what a man knows or believes to be his duty. In most natural and healthy persons this conscience is always associated with God, i. e., the man feels that whatever duty he owes, he owes to his Maker as well as to his fellowman. The inevitable inference to be drawn from the conscience in man is that the God who put it there must Himself be righteous. Only a good God could or would demand goodness from man or take any steps to make him good. So our nature teaches us these two facts about God, viz: that He is intelligent and that He is good.

Furthermore, we have the testimony of love. When we understand what true, unselfish love is, we see two facts. One, that the exercise of love makes the fulfilment of all duty delightful. It just gives the right impulse to the will to enable us to obey the conscience with alacrity and pleasure. Love is just the one thing which is wanted to keep us from injuring our brother and to make us do him all the good we can, and to find in that our highest happiness. But having once seen and tasted what love is, we know that no Being in heaven or earth can understand it unless He is loving Himself. If our love came from God, His best, most precious gift, then God knows what love is and He is loving. Only oh! how infinitely more than we! These very simple facts of our human nature form an indisputable basis for believing in and loving a wise, righteous and loving God.

Second in importance only to a true faith in God, Theists set the highest value on their public worship of God. From the very beginning they adopted a Liturgy compiled partly from the English Church Prayer Book and from original Prayers and Litanies.

As a matter of interest and importance it should be stated that the lessons read in the Services have been chosen from the writings of over 400 pious devout persons of every church and section of Christendom, as well as from the writings of Jews, Hindus, Parsees, Mohammedans, and of classical authors such as Socrates, Epictetus, Seneca, Cicero and Marcus Aurelius.

Theism is not yet popular. It is too controversial, perhaps. Yet the controversy is never against persons, but only against opinions. Ignorance of it is one cause. But the chief cause of all is the attitude taken by the Theists in regard to the great question "What think ye of Christ?" The Theistic answer to it is, "We have no certain or authentic record of what Jesus of Nazareth said or did. He may or may not have been 'the perfect ideal of humanity' and "the truest teacher about God that the world has ever seen and heard." But in the Gospels we

find, alongside with much that is beautiful and true, still more that is neither. The Evangelists ascribe to him teachings about God and man and destiny which are mutually contradictory, and therefore we are compelled to choose between them and say which are true and which are not true. This process destroys the 'authority' and makes us the judge of what Jesus ought and of what He ought not to have said. Equivalent to saying "we know the truth already independently of the teacher."

This is the Theistic position and it is very hard to make people understand that our real and deep reverence for all that Jesus said which was good and true forces us on moral and religious grounds to condemn that which was neither good nor true. The Theist maintains that if you wish to retain your belief in a perfect Christ, you must throw over a belief in the trustworthiness of the Gospels.

Great temptations have beset the minister, and still beset him, to tamper with the convictions arising out of incontrovertible facts and to be silent on points involving such a disturbance of popular sentiment. But allegiance to truth, the desire to benefit mankind, and, above all, the intense love for God are together an impulse which it is impossible to resist and which no bribes or threats can ever withstand.

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FAITH IN IMMORTALITY.

By Alfred W. Martin.

In the old royal forests of France the paths are so laid out as to terminate in a large open space, called a star, because the diverging roads radiate from it. One may come from any part of the forest, people may be walking in many different directions, but from whatever quarter they come they meet at last at the central star.

In the forest of human speculation the faith in immortality is such a star. Many are the thought-paths which converge at this central spot of sunshine and many and varied are the souls that from one or another starting-point of inquiry have found their way thither.

I propose to traverse the more frequented of these different thought-paths for the purpose of seeing what they respectively contribute as strengtheners of our faith in a future life and to what degree they approximate proof of immortality. Such a purpose has a distinct practical value inasmuch as many people construe their arguments as proofs when in reality they are tantamount only to strong intimations or probabilities. It will

certainly help to clarify our thought and fix our convictions on the subject if we thus review the main foundations on which the belief in immortality has been based and note their comparative worth.

1. Beginning with that which is perhaps the least significant argument in support of the belief, let us consider its universality and antiquity. Evidences of the existence of a belief in immortality can be traced back to an almost indefinite past and among all peoples of the earth. It would seem as if from remotest times the conception of death as a terminus has been foreign to mankind.

But the insufficiency of this fact as a foundation for the belief becomes apparent the moment we recall other beliefs, no less universal and ancient, which have been outgrown since the birth of modern science. Not indeed that the belief in immortality will necessarily share the same fate, but the fact that the race has relegated to the realm of superstition many a belief for which both universality and age can be claimed indicates that these attributes are no criterion of the validity or truth of any belief.

2. A second foundation is furnished by the so-called "instinct" of immortality which we are told has been present in the human heart from time immemorial. Search the world through, it is said, and you will find that an "instinctive sense of immortality" has been universally felt, that everywhere and always the hungry, loving, yearning human heart has appealed to this instinct in uttering its protest against annihilation and kindred conceptions of the hereafter.

> "Is this the whole sad story of creation,
> Told by its toiling millions o'er and o'er;
> One glimpse of day, then black annihilation,
> A sunlit passage to a sunless shore?"

Does appeal to instinct give us a satisfactory answer? We have an instinctive desire for food and food is supplied; for learning, and literature is provided; for social life and society is formed. Will not then this instinct of immortality also have its object of satisfaction? Must not this instinctive sense of soul-survival be "the echo of some permanent reality" somewhere? Surely this instinct which "like a sea has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate," was not born of any book, creed, or religion. It was born of human affection and it will continue to ebb and flow between the mists of doubt and darkness as long as "love kisses the lips of death." Such is

the passionate plea of those who found their faith in immortality upon an alleged instinct. And there are those who go so far as to say, "if it is not true, then what? It means that the universe is false. Somebody or something, some power, some intelligence, has told men, so that they have believed it, that death was an illusion and that life was the reality,—has told them that there was an invisible country of which those that went away from here were the inhabitants. Now, if this be not true, then how shall we trust any of our instincts and hopes and aspirations? Why shall we not think that the whole universe is hollow and heartless and mean?"*

But are we really warranted in clasifying the said instinct of immortality with the instincts of nutrition and reproduction? The most eminent of living psychologists Prof. Wm. James, in his essav on "What is instinct," gives us no warrant for so doing. "Instinct" ls no stable foundation for faith in immortality.

3. A third foundation on which the faith in our conscious survival of death has been built is the fact of desire for it. Every age and race, it is asserted, has cherished the desire for future existence, has looked forward to life beyond death and herein is a pledge of the reality of a hereafter, and stronger by far than that afforded by either of the preceding bases for the belief. But this argument grounded on "desire" has had its reality challenged again and again inasmuch as there are individuals and whole nations for whom immortality, has had no charm. The primitive barbarian, for example, far from rejoicing in the prospect of a life to come shuddered as he thought of his approaching earthly end, reluctant as he was to exchange the familiar joys of the warm and sunny earth for the unknown climate and companionship of another world. The Greeks and Romans, anticipating nothing but Hades, were loath to exchange terrestrial experience for the shadowy colorless existence of the underworld. Achilles declared that he would prefer to pass his days forever as a keeper of swine on earth than to rule as king of all the dead in Hades. Similarly the ancient Hebrews, holding the belief in Sheol, (the equivalent of Hades) found no delight in the contemplation of the hereafter and made the summum bonum of life to consist in the triple acquisition of a long life, a large family and material prosperity. If Prof. Max Mueller's conception of "Nirvana" be correct, then whole races of Buddhists anticipate ultimate annihilation as the goal of life and welcome it as the culmination of that series of rebirths to which they believe they are destined. And without the pale of Buddhism are thousands

*Rev. M. J. Savage, D.D., in his Easter Sermon, April 3, 1904.

who, for one reason or another, have no desire for immortality, preferring annihilation to any resumption of life after death. Confusing life with the conditions of life they see no way of relief for their over-burdened hearts except by putting an end to both in the eternal forgetfulness of the grave.

There are, then, cases to be cited that contradict the alleged universality of the desire for a future life.

To be sure, wherever life is healthy, normal, underanged, the desire for immortality obtains.

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No heart that breathes with human breath
Hath ever truly longed for death."

And any exceptions we may encounter only prove the rule. Still, the fact that normal beings desire continuation of life furnishes nothing more than an intimation of immortality. For aught we can know there may be in the universe a higher order of creation than persons, to which we stand related in the scale of evolution as the animal creation does to us. Nay more, Infinite Mind in the evolution of the universe, may have in view some end worthier even than personal immortality, albeit that such an end transcends our imagination.

At any rate the desire for immortality, however general or deep, cannot be regarded as a guarantee of the reality of a future life.

4. A fourth foundation—and a very popular one it was among the New England liberal Christians of fifty years ago—is intuition. It used to be thought that man has, besides such primary faculties as reason and conscience, another called intuition which puts him in direct touch with the great truths of God, freedom and immortality. This faculty transcends reason and experience as a source of knowledge; hence the name "Transcendentalist" came to be applied in this country to those who held this view. They "felt" their immortality "as an inspiration." They regarded their intuition as indisputable proof of the reality of a life beyond death. With Addison they said:

"I feel my immortality o'ersweep
All time, all change, all fears;
And peal like the eternal thunders of the deep,
Into mine ears this truth—
Man thou shalt never die."

Theodore Parker, foremost among the preachers of this Transcendentalism, insisted that he was conscious of immortality, that he felt it, knew it. But how can any one be said to know or be now conscious of a fact

which may occur at some future time? Whether or not we are immortal is a question of whether or not we shall continue to live after this state called death and inasmuch as this cannot be determined, known, realized until it occurs, it is simply impossible for any one to know it at the present time. In other words, it is a mis-use of language to say one knows that one is immortal. The most one can possibly mean by such a phrase is that one has a very strong assurance, a powerful intimation. Unless a belief be backed by adequate evidence, by demonstration, one has no right to treat his belief as knowledge. Furthermore, one who has an "intuition" of immortality cannot communicate it to another. The intuitionist's argument is good for none except those who have an intuition like unto his own. To the skeptic such an intuition is worthless as evidence, not only because it is a purely individual and not a universal possession but also because intuitions, as Spencer tells us, are simply "the inherited results of the thoughts and feelings of the race through countless centuries of the past."

5. This is Easter Sunday.* To day the Christianmillions are rehearsing the distinctively Christian foundation for the faith in a future life, namely the resurrection of Jesus. The New Testament states that all who "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" shall be "joint heirs with him" of immortality. His resurrection, it is urged, assumes the resurrection of all who accept him as their Savior, and, it is added, the fact of his resurrection is "attested by eye-witnesses" in the "infallible scriptures."

Concerning this fifth in the series of foundations it must be said that the "higher criticism" of the New Testament has been such as to disqualify it to serve as a witness in the case of the alleged resurrection of Jesus. The eye-witnesses when examined and cross-questioned are found to contradict each other. Paul, the earliest of all witnesses, never saw Jesus in the flesh at all, but only in a vision on a journey from Jerusalem to Damascus. The "triple tradition" (the story of the life of Jesus in which the three first evangelists agree) which is our next earliest witness has nothing whatever to say of either a resurrection or an ascension. Matthew, Mark and Luke relate stories the details of which contradict each other and the testimony of Paul as well, including the statement of such an impossibility as the sight of the bodily presence of Jesus at Jerusalem and at Emmaus at the same time by different persons. But, wholly apart from all that the higher criticism has done to undermine popular reliance on the New Testament as proving the reality

* This discourse was delivered April 3, 1904 before the Seattle Society for Universal Religion and written after delivery.

of Jesus' resurrection, this foundation fails to satisfy for other and incontrovertible reasons. Even if Jesus had risen from the dead it would not prove that all believing Christians are immortal, because it was as God or as the Son of God, i. e., as a supernatural person, that Jesus rose from the dead. Now, men may do what man has done, but not necessarily what a **supernatural** being has done. Jesus, it is said, differed from all other men in **kind** as well as in **degree.** Consequently the argument for immortality based on his resurrection is fallacious.

Nay, more, not even if Jesus were a man, differing only in degree from all others, would his resurrection prove the immortality of believing followers. It would prove only that **all** men are not eternally subject to death. Beyond this no inference of a general immortality can be logically established.

6. Sixth in the succession of foundations comes moral compensation. The world's history is replete with instances of wickedness prospering and righteousness being trampled down, of a seemingly unwarranted disparity between virtue and prosperity, so that the incensed heart cries out for requital, for justice to be done in a hereafter. We need a future state, it is said, if for nothing else, to bring about the fulfilment of justice or moral compensation. Here, for example, is an unscrupulous "sweater" squandering his ill-gotten gains on superfluities, while his ill-paid employees eke out a miserable existence on "starvation wages." Here, again, is an unprincipled politician who by bribery secures a well-salaried office which should have gone to the candidate of sterling integrity and honor. Here, once more, is a shrewd and shameless sharper enjoying life in a luxuriously appointed mansion on a fashionable thoroughfare, while the victims of his fraudulent operations occupy ill-ventilated quarters on unfrequented streets and alleys. How shall retribution be meted out to these sinners if there be no future state? Thus have men founded their faith in immortality on the necessity of compensation for the unrewarded righteous and retribution of the prosperous wicked. Yet not even on this foundation can the faith securely stand. For justice, which lies at the heart of things, closes up the affairs of the universe at every instant, so that were it to be annihilated at this moment the books of judgment would be found balanced and every jot and tittle of law fulfilled. In Emerson's phrase, "the dice of God are loaded." Natural law leaves no straws for the gleaning an-

gels of another world, but completes its work from moment to moment. No hereafter, then, is required to right these seeming wrongs, because punishment is meted out the moment any law is broken, and the degree of retribution is in exact ratio to the violation of law. Daily we see the demonstration of this truth on the physical, intellectual and moral-spiritual planes. Vice carries punishment in itself, working out terrible consequences for those who disobey the laws of health, physical and every other kind of health as well. Keep a law on the economic plane and break one on the moral plane, or vice versa, and the consequences instantly follow on each plane, thus reconciling all cases of rich scoundrels and poor saints. The ends of justice are attained in every instance and therefore the effort to build faith in a future life on the alleged need of future recompense and retribution fails.

7. Not so, however, the argument based on the incompletenesses, inequalities and terrible tragedies of our human life. Here, for example, is an infant dying just at it reaches self-consciousness. Here, again, is a young woman, bedridden for years, all the while dreaming of work she would do and could do were it not that she is permanently disabled. Here are boys in their teens, born in the slums of our large cities, with never a chance to know the meaning of real manhood, developing into criminals of every shade and grade. Here, once more, are men like Michael Angelo, thwarted, hampered all their life long by conditions and circumstances that forbid their achieving the highest of which they are capable. Here is a charming young woman betrayed and seduced by the man who had love without honor. She is despised, maligned, ostracised by the social circle to which she belonged, while he goes scot free and retains his social position as before. What shall we say of such dark, forbidding, tragic facts as these? Surely they mean either that a wise, just and loving God has created us and will provide somehow, somewhere, a future in which all these wrongs can be righted, or else that no God at all has created us, but a hideous, heartless fiend. Such, indeed, was Tennyson's belief. Once when discussing the subject with his friend Knowles, editor of the "Contemporary Review," the poet, crimson with intense feeling, declared that if God has provided no future for us, "then I would shake my fist in his Almighty face and tell him that I cursed him." To Tennyson it was simply intolerable that man — Nature's last work, "who seemed so fair, such splendid purpose in his eyes; who loved, who suffered countless ills; who bat-

tled for the true and the just,"—should at last be "blown about the desert dust or sealed within the iron hills." The idea of annihilation is to him "a monster, a dream, a discord" in comparison with which the tearings of primeval dragons in their slime would be "mellow music."

Thus does immortality become a moral necessity if justice prevails. And this argument as illustrated by Tennyson is decidedly reinforced when we consider the case of those great souls in all ages and climes and in all vocations who have steadfastly pursued their respective ideals, kept loyally consecrated to the realization of what they felt was attainable, but who were cut off at one or another stage in the development of their sacred plan. Such faithful devotion to the ideal while on earth entitles them to further opportunity when death brings their earthly efforts to an end. Personal immortality in their case is an ethical necessity. Nothing less than that meets the requirement of justice. And if it be objected to this argument that Nature gives us no warrant for the assumption of the survival of such souls, since "of fifty seeds she often brings but one to bear," the answer is that analogies can be made in only one category. Illogical it is to reason concerning man from what we see in plants, or in animals. The totality of human powers which we call soul distinguishes man from all else that has been created, and this distinctive quality in man disposes of the skepticism bred of illogical analogies and leaves unassailed the strongest and supreme argument for immortality, that which makes it an **ethical** necessity.

8. The theory that we human beings are mere atoms in a world of dead matter is as repulsive as it is untenable, and one of the proudest achievements of modern scientific thought is the complete and permanent destruction of this crass materialism.

We lift our eyes to the heavens and observe the wondrous march of the stars, the solemn movements of the planets held in their celestial orbits by the invisible force of gravitation and all moving to "tones of spheral music in a great symphony of cosmic harmonies." We turn from the heavens to the earth, from the great to the small, and lo, what marvels of grandeur and grace are unfolded in the commonest flowers of the field, what beauty and power in the different forms of the crystal, what infinite treasures are hidden in the snow, what numerous and varied life-forms float even in the tiniest drop of water!

Yet with all that there is in external nature to excite our admiration and awe, we feel these sentiments are more deeply stirred when we contemplate human nature. For we human beings are somewhat more than any of these physical objects; we are of a wholly different order from all else that is, and therefore we are not to be classed with melting snows, sterile seeds, falling leaves or fading flowers.

Why should man entertain so exalted a conception of himself? It is because unlike all other creatures he can both see and pursue an ideal of life; it is because he can both see what he **is** and what he **ought to be,** and go whither that sacred ought points. 'Tis in the allegiance of man to imperishable spiritual law that his distinctive greatness lies; this it is that differentiates him from all other creatures in the animal kingdom. That he can raise himself to such allegiance puts him in a class apart from planets and crystals, flowers and trees and all the tribes of animals, and suggests that he belongs to a realm that knows neither dissolution nor decay.

Of all the arguments in support of personal immortality, the most engaging and most convincing is this one derived from man's distinctive characteristic, his capacity to see and pursue an ideal. If he could attain his ideal here on earth, the final end and aim of his existence would be realized, there would be no reason for further existence and nothing could remain for him but dissolution as the proper sequel to completed evolution. Therefore, the only rational ground for expecting continuance of being after death lies in the present incompleteness of his being and its infinite possibilities.

In every man there inheres an ideal other than which there can be none for him. To develop the real, or what I am, into the ideal, which is what I ought to be, constitutes life's highest mission. Obviously this is an eternal task, because the ideal, by its very nature, is unattainable. Perfection is an infinite achievement and as such is forever beyond our reach. Yet to strive for perfection is the supreme task to which we are called, a task, moreover, which we have scarcely begun when death brings it to a close. How shall the paradox be explained—men called to attain the unattainable? Only on the assumption that death does not end life, that there exists endless opportunity hereafter in which loyal pursuit of the ideal, cut short by death, may be resumed. Remove that hypothesis and at once the universe becomes both irrational and immoral and Nature defeats the end she had in view in the creation of man. Personality is the highest

category of being known to us, personal loyalty to the ideal is the highest moral purpose known to us; therefore, when death comes to the person who has loyally pursued the ideal, reason and justice require a future state in which the right to continue that pursuit shall be respected. Such is the argument which makes immortality an ethical necessity. It represents the nearest approach to demonstration at present possible. Until the central claim of Spiritualism has undergone the ordeal of universal verification, passed through the six steps of the scientific method, which is the recognized criterion of all truth—it will be incorrect to say that we **know** we are immortal. Before we can claim knowledge of immortality we must be able to add to all our reasonings **experience**, and of immortality no one can be said to have had experience, while the controversy exists over the phenomena of spiritism. Yet in the absence of positive knowledge of immortality rational grounds for belief in it remain, and of these the chief is furnished by reason in contemplating the fact of loyal pursuit of the ideal and the consequent right of the pursuer to be permitted to continue his quest beyond the confines of earth's opportunities.

What are we here for? We are here to realize the infinite possibilities of our being, or, to speak more accurately, we are here to enter on the realization of those possibilities. This realization is the supreme good; the will that strives for the supreme good is the good will, and the good will cannot die in a universe that is rational and moral.

JAPAN AND THE WAR WITH RUSSIA.

By Tokiwo Yokoi.

Since the present war began there has been noticed here and there a kind of fanatical hatred of Greek Catholics, as being under the leadership of a Russian missionary already thirty years in Japan, Bishop Nicolai, and a certain tendency to utilize the present occasion for the revival of Buddhism by attempting to make out the struggle between Japan and Russia as a struggle between Buddhism and Christianity. You will see that these things were but a small and insignificant counterpart of the somewhat bombastic talk of the "yellow peril" current among certain classes of people in the West. In view of these reactionary tendencies, although quite insignificant and small in area, the leaders among the Christian (Protestant), Buddhist and Shintoist religions have lately come together to consult as to the proper measures to be taken for

nipping in the bud these ignorant and fanatical tendencies and initiating an enlightened and broader movement among our countrymen. Their idea seems to be that in the present great struggle with Russia our countrymen ought to know no difference of religion and be united as one people in support of the government; that the Japanese people ought to rise to a higher and broader standpoint than that of religion or race, to the standpoint, namely, of common humanity and civilization, which, being concretely stated in everyday phrase, means commercial open door and peace of the Far East. Most of its leaders, at least those who are considered the most intelligent among them, are on the committee for calling a great gathering to meet in Tokyo on the 18th of May, and I have no doubt the resolutions which will be carried at the meeting and the measures and course of action to be pursued which will be decided at that gathering will be quite effectual in stopping all mischievous and reactionary tendencies and explaining to peoples abroad the real state of things prevailing in Japan.

This gathering of leaders for the common work of patriotism and humanity will be useful, besides, in other directions as well. There has never been any opportunity of the kind in the past, but this occasion will serve to lead the leaders who have otherwise little chance of knowing each other, to become well acquainted with each other and to hold more charitable opinions of each other, and possibly may be a harbinger of the happier time coming when religious rivalries will give place to the more honorable rivalry for good doing and humanitarian service.

May all who are strong sympathizers of Japan in the hour of her great struggle as a nation do all they can to spread intelligent conceptions of the cause and object of the war now going on. I trust that if the struggle should end in our favor the result will be, while damaging to the reactionary aristocracy now at the head of the Russian nation, a blessing to the Russian people by leading to the initiation of liberal and constitutional regime. There is not the slightest feeling of hatred toward the Russian people, but only to the policy pursued by the recent militant autocracy which holds the peaceful Czar even as its captive. Russia began under the intelligent guidance of Czar Alexander II., in the early sixties, the great emancipation movement beginning with the liberation of 23 millions of serfs, but the liberal regime was killed after a few years by ignorant aristocracy combined with selfish bureaucracy. Japan started in a similar career of regeneration about

the same time, or rather a decade later, but carried out the original purpose to the logical end. And the result today is victory for the one and defeat for the other—Freedom, education, constitutionalism, civilization, fighting and defeating oppression, ignorance, autocracy and semi-barbarism.

WHAT ARE WE HERE FOR.

By Benjamin Fay Mills.

It is my opinion that we are here in this world in order that we may learn by contact with events and circumstances and people, with the actual world, the great lessons of unselfishness. We are not here to get or to keep wealth, nor for the purpose of founding families; nor for developing the search for happiness; nor for the attainment of ordinary knowledge; we are here for just one purpose and that is to learn how to be unselfish. Unselfishness regards the individual only as a part of the whole, and loses the lesser in the larger self.

We are taught by some great teachers both in the Orient and the Occident, that the way to discover the secret of existence and come to perfection is through seclusion from the world. Retirement may be a blessing and it may be a curse to a man and to his fellows. It may be necessary for the student, or philosopher, or poet, or inventor, or author, or minister, but never as an attempt to selfishly develop one's own soul. It would not even be aiming at the mark, for one to seek to be alone for his own sake. He does not understand what he is if he thinks in any sense he is separate from the whole universe.

Who are the men whom the world believes have solved the problem and found the secret of life? Four-fifths of the world honor four men above all others,—Moses, Buddha, Monhammed and Jesus. Every one of these men knew something of the value of retirement, and of the inspiration that may come to a man when he is able to commune with his own soul and find God in the heart of it, but they were none of them recluses. What we remember about them is that they were great servants of humanity and exemplified the principle of unselfishness.

What human experiences can we select and say that they came to us in order that we might learn to love. We cannot select any, for there is no experience that is not intended for this purpose. Birth and death, joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity, all the experience of man from the cradle to the grave, is simply to teach him to find his higher soul in the good of humanity.

We see this perfectly in the family life. The baby at first does not learn anything but helps those who care for it to develop capacity for unrequited service. The beauty of the service of the baby is that we are all its slaves without hope or expectation of reward, and the more helpless the baby the more perfect its mission in demanding the allegiance of the wise and strong. But after a while the baby who, when he cried, has been soothed by something that he wanted, is now soothed in a different way. The mother says, "Please don't cry, darling, it hurts mamma to have you cry." And the baby ceases, as an unselfish contribution to his mother's comfort, and that is lesson number one. And so, when a little older, the girl grows thoughtful and the boy pure for the mother's and father's sake.

Then there is more than one baby. There are babies taking care of babies. There are brothers and sisters entering into a co-operation so perfect, that it seems to be no mere accidental mechanical union, but a real joining in one organization of the different lives, so that some of our social philosophers tell us that not the individual, but the family is the unit of society.

But no matter how closely together may be drawn the brothers and sisters, there comes a time when there is "a nearer one still and a dearer one still." And this is another lesson, perhaps the most poetic and powerful in all of the human schools; learning one lesson of complete devotion to humanity by learning the first lesson of complete devotion to one soul. So, in the early years of adjustment of the married life, when the imperfections begin to show, when one begins to discover that all is not what was expected in the other, then we realize the insufficiency of our nature, glorifying the object of love, and binding soul to soul more perfectly with every advancing year and every testing. Then we are given a higher lesson. The lesson of brotherhood and sisterhood was beautiful; the lesson of loverhood was ideal. Fatherhood and motherhood are better and still more ideal. The parent seeks the good of the child, and not his own convenience or satisfaction; and we are good parents to just the extent that we are doing the very best we can in seeking not what we want, but what the child really wants and needs, so far as we can see it. That is why we become parents, although possibly some of us have not discovered it. That is the reason why there came into the home this little messenger of the Eternal, that we might easily learn how to be unselfish.

The larger social life is meant to teach us to learn to love. And incongruous and deformed and sometimes almost hideous as some parts of ordinary social intercourse are, still they cannot

hide the beauty of its object. Our society word for a man, with the one adjective selected to qualify him, by the consent of the civilized world, is gentleman,—the gentle man. What is your conception of a gentleman or a lady? Not someone who has money to thrown away and time to spend frivolously. No. He is a real gentleman, she is a genuine lady, who has learned something more than his or her fellows of the lessons of unselfishness, and the motto of all polite society is this,—"In honor preferring one another."

PRACTICAL IDEALISM.*

By N. Hill Nesbitt.

I am well aware that in choosing "Practical Idealism" as the subject of discussion I am likely to evoke cynical smiles from a majority of "average" men who regard idealism in any form as being far removed from the realm of the practical as pole from pole. However this may be, I shall attempt to show that the persistent holding of an ideal is not only practical in every sense of the word, but that it is the supreme factor in the realization of its own ends. In these days of mad rush and cut-throat competition in all lines of endeavor, the overworked children of earth give themselves very little time for the repose that is absolutely essential to spiritual growth. Hence there is nothing considered less profitable—and in the business world "practical" and "profitable" are synonymous —than an ideal, which is considered fit only for an idle and dilletante visionary, and is not convertible into material dollars and cents at an early date.

This attitude of mind is caused by the prevalence of an entirely false idea regarding the true nature of an ideal. Most people have a more or less clearly defined impression that an idal is a purely visionary and therefore unattainable something. It is mentally compared to the mythical pot of gold under the end of a rainbow which is eagerly sought for by imaginative children. An enthusiastic chase is undertaken, if the rainbow lasts long enough, but inevitable disappointment is the result. The fleeting prism is pursued, and it ever recedes, to vanish finally before even a glimpse of the coveted treasure is obtained. This is the mistaken conception of an ideal one hears from the lips of many, and I venture to suggest that it is often used as a poor excuse to cover the shortcomings and weaknesses of fallible humanity.

Such an explanation is that of the morally lazy. By such individuals an ideal is defined as an intangible counsel of impossible perfection. This is the idea of the man who is not in earnest. The truly purposeful man has an entirely different manner of proceeding. He realizes that one thing is good and the other bad, that the good thing may be harder to get, but is all the more profitable from the difficulty of attainment. He wants it and wants it badly, he wants it all the time, he wants it so much that he will cheerfully sacrifice ease and comfort and the quiet peace of his body, if only he can obtain it. And before very long his work begins to come true, little by little the power that he longed for falls upon him like a freshening breeze. Even without his full recognition, he has been drawing nearer to his ideal. Then he sees as never before that anything, within human limits, is possible for the man who wants it with sufficient persistence.

With all our imperfections we have this one divine heritage, the possibility of infinite development, of limitless growth in any normal direction we may select. The outcome depends upon the amount of force which we put into our efforts and not upon outside conditions.

Opportunities for improvement always have been, and are, present, but they wear the cap of invisibility for the man of weak resolve and deficient concentration. But to the man of ideals they stand out as plain as mountains, as easily seen as a tree swaying in the wind. The difference is not in them, for they are ever the same; it is in the man himself, in the power of his practical idealism.

*Extract from a discourse delivered in the First Free Church, Sunday, August 14th, 1904.

EDITORIAL.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT ON THOMAS PAINE.

An esteemed subscriber calls our attention to the passage in President Roosevelt's "Life of Gouvernor Morris," published in 1896, in which he speaks of Thomas Paine as a "filthy little Atheist." Our correspondent further informs us that Rev. M. M. Mangasarian of Chicago wrote to the president concerning this opprobrious epithet but received no reply to his communication. It is certainly to be regretted that Mr. Roosevelt should have allowed himself to speak in such disparaging and unwarranted terms of one whose services to the cause of civil and religious liberty

have been so inestimably great. We can only assume that the President of the United States did not know as much about the truth concerning Thomas Paine as he has learned since Mr. Mangasarian's letter was received. That this letter should not have been acknowledged may be accounted for on wholly other grounds than its contents. None the less it is to be deplored that no sort of public retraction of so slurring and erroneous a statement as that found in the biography of Gouvernor Morris has been even hinted. We must believe that reparation of the wrong will yet be made. A man is never so much a gentleman as when he chivalrously declares he has been unjust and done another a wrong. especially when that other is one to whom America owes so much and whose services to the cause of American independence no patriot can ever disown or forget.

THE ETHICS OF THINKING.

One of the most important truths brought to light by recent studies of the mind is that thinking is a moral act. Some of us have never considered the action of our minds in this serious light. The moral act is usually conceived as the outward act. So long as we do not steal we are apt to feel that we may think as we please about such deeds. So long as we do no harm to our neighbor we imagine we have a right to think all sorts of harmful things about him. As the civil law cannot touch what goes on in the mind, we deliver over our thoughts to anarchy and lawlessness. But the truth is that thinking is an act to which the highest moral responsibility attaches. Indeed, it is the source of all moral life. The movement of the arms to strike a blow, of the finger to pull the trigger of a pistol, or of the tongue to tell a falsehood, is a purely mechanical process. They are as mechanical as the revolutions of a fly-wheel and, in the proper sense of the word, cannot be called moral acts at all. The real moral life is antecedent to all of these. It lies in the thoughts and feelings which we allow to occupy our minds.

Shakespeare was surely right in saying that it is thinking which makes good or evil. If our thinking be good, then will our character be good. The inner spiritual forces are the real powers that shape our destiny. The ideas which our memories recall, the complex images which our constructive imagination creates, the passions which rule in our hearts—these are the elementary materials out of which we build the edifice of the soul.—R.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD.

TACOMA.

During the vacation period notable improvements were made on the church property including a new foundation of brick, a stairway leading from the vestibule of the hall to the rooms below, the installation of a new set of electric lights and the construction of toilet and dressing rooms. The triangular lot 40x140 feet, at the north end of the property was sold in July and the proceeds were devoted to defraying the expenses incurred by the improvements.

In response to the advertisement published in "Unity" and the "Christian Register" thirteen ministers representing five denominations (Unitarian, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational, Universalist,) have applied for the position made vacant by the resignation of Mr. John W. Roberts as minister of the First Free church. Besides these, application was made by Mr. Norman Hill Nesbitt, a graduate of Edinburgh University and a Ph. D., of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, who has just completed a course of ten lectures in Tacoma Music Hall on "Ethical Psychology." An opportunity was given Mr. Nesbitt to be heard before the Tacoma congregation August 14th and 21st, and the impression made was such as to secure for him a call for one year as minister of the Society. It is very gratifying to have this problem of a new minister solved so early in the season, Mr. Nesbitt brings to his new field an abundance of energy and enthusiasm which coupled with his gift as a ready speaker and successful organizer give great promise of developing the various branches of the Society's work. Mr. Nesbitt makes his initial contribution to our monthly in this number and will hereafter be a regular contributor to its pages. Though having served in a ministerial capacity for a church of his own creating, Mr. Nesbitt has not yet been ordained, but a service of ordination will be held October 5th, to which special interest attaches in that it is the first in the history of the new movement.

SEATTLE.

On Sunday, October 2nd, the activities of the Society for Universal Religion will be resumed for the season 1904-'05. During his vacation Mr. Martin has been engaged in the preparation of a new "service book" consisting of responsive readings selected from the bibles of the great religions and topically arranged under forty titles, together with a series of forty "com-

munings'' or ''silent prayers'' and a revised edition of the Hymn-collection used by the Society. It is expected that this new book will be ready for use by the first of January.

The ''Junior Branch'' will conduct its Sunday studies in classes, instead of collectively with Mr. Martin as heretofore. A special series of illustrated lessons on ''Habits'' has been prepared for the season's study with Mr. W. L. Sheldon's ''Lessons on Habits'' as the teacher's text-book, supplemented by regular fortnightly teachers' meetings with Mr. Martin.

The Woman's Union has devoted much of the summer to preparations for a large and attractive Christmas sale of fancy and useful articles to be held early in December, the proceeds of which will be used to carry on the various activities for which this branch of the Society was organized.

LONDON.

The Theistic church has recently had occasion to rejoice over the announcement of its contribution to the Metropolitan hospitals fund to which for nearly thirty years, the church has made its annual donations. Mr. Voysey, the minister, while encouraging this practice of contributing to this fund, does not plead for it. He simply watches it and regards it as a test of the growth of the Theistic church and of the healthy spirit of its members. This year the sum contributed was over $1,500 as compared with about $1,100 the year before and $1,000 in 1902. Thousands of churches, chapels and synagogues, including St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey contribute to this fund and last year the Theistic church stood twelfth in the list. The church is growing in numbers and in influence and its members act on the principle that ''it is more blessed to give than to receive.''

The sincere and hearty thanks of the editor of this monthly have been tendered Mr. Voysey for his valued aid in enlarging its circulation throughout the British Empire. Through his courteous and friendly suggestion we prepared a circular letter concerning our monthly which he had mailed to over two thousand people who subscribe to the weekly sermon from his London pulpit.